

An Estuarine Invader - How Oregon's Spartina Response Plan is Reaching Beyond Borders

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Oregon has taken a proactive stance in designing and implementing its Spartina Response Plan. Although the focus of the plan is preventing the spread and establishment of invasive cordgrasses within Oregon, it is simultaneously serving to strengthen public awareness and cooperation between agencies, land managers and scientists across the entire west coast. Since the plan was drafted in 2003, implementation has included: the identification of susceptible estuaries and subsequent early detection surveys; public education and outreach, the development of a vegetative key to Spartina species and a greenhouse study of rhizome fragments as potential propagules for local and long-distance dispersal. Research currently underway includes a year-long drift card study to model the movement of Spartina wrack from three heavily infested west coast estuaries - Willapa Bay in Washington, and Humboldt Bay and San Francisco Bay in California. Drift card studies are effective at demonstrating near-surface currents as well as natural collection zones where Spartina wrack and/or seeds might be likely to land.